

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A method for purifying a 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer produced by a microorganism,
which comprises treating an aqueous suspension containing the 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer separated from a microorganism with a hydrogen peroxide while controlling the pH of said aqueous suspension by adding an alkali either continuously or intermittently.
2. (Original) The purification method according to Claim 1, wherein the pH of the aqueous suspension is controlled to be between 7 and 13.
3. (Currently amended) The purification method according to Claim 1 ~~[[or 2]]~~, wherein the concentration of hydrogen peroxide in the aqueous suspension is in a range of 0.01 to 1 % by weight.
4. (Currently amended) The purification method according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3~~ Claim 1, wherein the 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer is a copolymer of D-3-hydroxyhexanoate and one or more other D-3-hydroxyalkanoic acids.
5. (Currently amended) The purification method according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3~~ Claim 1, wherein the 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer is a copolymer constituted of at least two species of monomers selected from a group consisting of 3-hydroxypropionate, 3-hydroxybutyrate, 3-hydroxyvalerate, 3-hydroxyhexanoate, 3-hydroxyheptanoate and 3-hydroxyoctanoate.
6. (Currently amended) The purification method according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3~~ Claim 1,

wherein the 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer is a binary copolymer derived from D-3-hydroxyhexanoate and D-3-hydroxybutyrate, or a ternary copolymer derived from D-3-hydroxyhexanoate, D-3-hydroxybutyrate and D-3-hydroxyvalerate.

7. (Currently amended) The purification method according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 6~~ Claim 1,

wherein the microorganism producing the 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer is a microorganism belonging to the genus *Aeromonas*.

8. (Original) The purification method according to Claim 7, wherein the microorganism producing the 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer is *Aeromonas caviae* or *Aeromonas hydrophila*.

9. (Currently amended) The purification method according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 6~~ Claim 1,

wherein the microorganism producing the 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer is a cell strain of microorganism transformed by a poly-3-hydroxyalkanoic acid synthase group gene derived from *Aeromonas caviae*.

10. (Currently amended) The purification method according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 9~~ Claim 1,

wherein the aqueous suspension of the 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer is obtainable by;

solubilizing the total or part of cell constituent substances

other than the 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer to separate the 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer by adding an alkali simultaneously with physical disruption while stirring a suspension of a 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer-containing strain, and

suspending the 3-hydroxyalkanoic acid copolymer in water.